

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: Differences in New Graduate Nurse Critical Thinking Skills Using Concept Mapping

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New graduate nurses often lack the critical thinking skills needed to recognize and manage patient problems and life-threatening conditions. Concept mapping is an analytical tool used to enhance nurses' critical thinking skills. The purpose of this descriptive comparison study is to determine whether concept mapping improves critical thinking skills in new graduate nurses during a hospital orientation program. This is a replication of Wilgis and McConnell's (2008) study. The theoretical framework is Benner's (1984, 2001) Novice to Expert Theory. A convenience sample of new graduate nurses will be recruited from a mid-sized Midwestern tertiary care hospital. Schuster's (2003) Concept Map Care Plan Evaluation Tool will be adapted to measure new graduate nurse's critical thinking in concept maps based on case studies completed at the beginning and end of orientation. Findings will provide information about the effectiveness of concept mapping in developing and assessing critical thinking skills in new graduate nurses.